

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
EASTERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Docket No.

- against -

20 Cr. 213 (KAM)

TYSHAWN CORBETT,

Defendant.

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**SENTENCING MEMORANDUM FOR TYSHAWN CORBETT**  
(Along with Accompanying Exhibits)

Anthony Cecutti, Esq.  
Attorney for Tyshawn Corbett  
217 Broadway, Suite 707  
New York, NY 10007  
(917) 741-1837

Kenneth J. Montgomery, Esq.  
Attorney for Tyshawn Corbett  
198 Rogers Avenue  
Brooklyn, New York 11225  
(718) 403-9261

July 17, 2023

**Via ECF**

The Honorable Kiyo A. Matsumoto  
United States District Judge  
Eastern District of New York  
225 Cadman Plaza East  
Brooklyn, New York 11201

**Re: United States v. Tyshawn Corbett; 20 Cr. 213 (KAM)**

Dear Judge Matsumoto:

This sentencing memorandum is submitted in advance of sentencing for Tyshawn Corbett. Tyshawn pled guilty before Your Honor on September 6, 2022, to Counts Four, Eight and Fifteen of the above-captioned indictment, each charging a violation of 18 U.S.C. § 924(c)(1)(A)(iii), pursuant to a plea agreement with the government. He faces a mandatory minimum of 30 years' imprisonment.<sup>1</sup> The stipulated Guidelines Range is 360 months and the government has agreed not to seek a sentence above 35 years' imprisonment. We ask that this Court impose a sentence of 30 years or 360 months. Such a sentence is "sufficient, but not greater than necessary," to satisfy all the purposes of sentencing, for Tyshawn Corbett.

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Tyshawn Corbett is a bright young man that, if his life circumstances were different, would have had a much more meaningful life that would not result in him currently facing a minimum of 30 years of incarceration for a series of violent shootings, including one that resulted in the death of a rival gang member. Innately kind and respectful, he is desiring of purpose and change. Tyshawn falls firmly into a statistical category of young Black and Brown men in America born into poverty, violence, and a legacy of oppression, racial discrimination, and trauma that is unique to the American experience.

Tyshawn grew up in a community disenfranchised politically, socially, and economically. The East New York neighborhood where he was raised, was deprived of basic necessities that all of us would agree are necessary to successfully and adequately nurture and raise healthy children. None of us who are parents would want to raise our children in the normalized deprivation that existed in East New York, Brooklyn, in 1990 at the time Tyshawn was born—the question as to why as parents, we would not is an acknowledgment of the difficult conditions and environment in East New York. However, as a society, we find difficulty in appreciating and understanding the conduct of those children and the causal and correlative relationship to the environment and its root causes. We dismiss the conditions and their effects because of those

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<sup>1</sup> Tyshawn is also awaiting sentencing for an unrelated firearms offense before the Honorable Eric N. Vitaliano in *United States v. Tyshawn Corbett*, 19 Cr. 46 (ENV). Sentencing is scheduled for November 3, 2023. Pursuant to the terms of the instant plea agreement, this Court's sentence must run consecutively to any sentence imposed in *United States v. Tyshawn Corbett*, 19 Cr. 46 (ENV).

from the community who somehow survived those conditions. However, time and history provide perspective. Co-counsel Montgomery actually grew up in neighboring Brownsville, Brooklyn, and the very year that Tyshawn was born in 1990 was the year that Counsel Montgomery was headed to college out of state in Virginia. His mother had made it clear she did not care what college accepted him out of New York; he was going whether he wanted to or not. His mother's sense of urgency and firmness stemmed from several factors. Many of Counsel Montgomery's friends were being shot and killed or incarcerated in their teenage years. His mother spent countless nights waiting for him to come home, sometimes praying that he would make it home safely. So many of her neighbors and co-workers were not as fortunate. Her concern was with good reason. In 1990, there were some 2600 murders citywide in New York City<sup>2</sup>. This did not include shootings where the victim survived.

Time has afforded an opportunity since 1990 to look at the environment and statistics from both East New York and Brownsville, where Tyshawn and Counsel were respectively born and raised. The educational system, unemployment statistics, and statistics on violence are just as woeful today as they were in 1990. The conditions have remained the same, and the same levels of deprivation that existed 33 years ago in 1990 in East New York and Brownsville exist today. The conditions have remained the same, and the cycle continues, with Tyshawn representing another generation of men who will spend decades in prison. The only tried, and true solution we have, is to incarcerate as many young men from these communities as possible for as long as possible and, in some instances, even seek execution. The educational system and the other social institutions that help us determine the pulse of the community are still poor and underserved. The education system in East New York often becomes the feeder to the school-to-prison pipeline. As a society, we want these young men to be better without acknowledging that their conditions have remained the same.

Young men like Tyshawn and the other young men in this indictment learn early to be hypervigilant as children. They lose their innocence and childhood to trauma. Social and political alienation somewhere along the line is embraced. Their lives are manifested moment by moment with little to no planning or hope for the future. Violence and deprivation become and are normative. And they are now commodified in popular culture through entertainment, music and gang culture. It is within this context and set of social and political dynamics that Tyshawn was victimized and perpetrated violence, and will now serve decades in prison.

### **East New York, Brooklyn**

In 1984, New York City recorded 1786 murders, and for the next 13 years, the city averaged nearly two thousand murders per year, topping 2605 in 1990. Very few cities in America exhibited destruction and urban decay in America, like East New York. East New York suffered apartheid-like policies. The negative impact of racial and economic segregation was manifold in East New York and resulted in a lack of social services. Advances in education, child care, health, youth programs, and other social services were disrupted by austerity policies and political ineptness. As an example of the neglect and corruption that prevented growth in the

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.disastercenter.com/crime/nycrime.htm>; <https://www.nytimes.com/1991/04/23/nyregion/new-york-killings-set-a-record-while-other-crimes-fell-in-1990.html>

community, top Federal Housing Authority officials and prestigious firms like Dun and Bradstreet, were indicted for fraud. They lied about East New York homebuyer incomes, appraised values, and housing quality in the service of unscrupulous mortgage brokers who were paying them off. In 1966, 40 percent of East New York households were living in poverty<sup>3</sup>.

Years of social, political, and economic alienation created an urban war zone stripping East New York of an infrastructure capable of pulsating the community and addressing the harm that had been done over time. The community suffered race riots as Black and Hispanic residents moved into East New York. While Black and Hispanic residents moved in for better opportunities, Eastern European residents benefited from government-backed mortgage programs under the New Deal and other programs, and white flight allowed them to move to the suburbs of New York. In the 1960s and 1970s, race and poverty defined the area as New York City teetered on bankruptcy, and communities like East New York underwent crippling austerity policies and programs that choked any opportunity out of the community. The heroin epidemic in the 1960s carried into the 1970s to further handicap the community. In the 1980s and 1990s, crack cocaine would be the last straw that destabilized any possibility of community and the ability of those in the community to take care of their children. The legacy of the devastation is what we are witnessing in the present indictment.

East New York was devastated by the economic divestment by America's most influential and well-sourced financial institutions. Several mortgage scandals in the late 1970s had left the neighborhood virtually abandoned. Counsel Montgomery, as a young child, grew up in neighboring Brownsville. As a child, he vividly remembers playing in vacant lots and abandoned buildings as a kid, being in awe of the sheer destruction that surrounded the community where he played and lived, and wondering how the neighborhood came to look like that. You could not help but wonder how your community got to look like a war zone. Surviving these circumstances as a child with very few things in your control presented a constant battle both mentally and emotionally to dream outside of that reality and navigate a viable and reliable path out of the deprivation.

Children, parents, and the community need reliable and adequate practical and functioning systems to persevere through systemic inequity and adversity. The false cliche of "pulling yourself up by the bootstraps" sounds convincing but intellectual honesty and history tell us that successful children who lead meaningful lives more often than not come from communities that are equipped to instill a nurturing environment and time and space for healthy development. We wrongly assume that it is the talents, intellect, and uniqueness of our children and ignore the nurturing systems and environment that provide comfort and support. Society also minimizes the luck that occurs in surviving oppressive and deprived environments.

In East New York, economic and job opportunities were scarce, schools were under-resourced, and social services lacked adequate resources. There was nothing to offset the adversity the youth in the community faced. When infrastructure is absent, and poverty is unaddressed, violence is always nearby. In these environments unfairly defined by violence, both children and parents become accustomed to the pop and bang of gunfire. Young men became all too familiar with the sound of bullets making that distinct noise as they travel in the air and

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<sup>3</sup> Walter Thabit, How East New York Became a Ghetto (2003).

whistle within inches of your ear drum. The sound of shell casings striking metal fences in the park on hot summer days are common occurrences. Hearing about who was shot or killed becomes customary on playgrounds and school lunchrooms—protocol of what to do while inside the home during gunfire becomes second nature. The bloodstained concrete and yellow tape become a part of the community landscape as children navigate their childhood.

**Tyshawn's Life History, Experience of Trauma and Deprivation in East New York, and Struggles with Mental Illness**

It was in this environment in 1990 that Tyshawn Corbett was born and raised with his siblings by a single mother. Tyshawn's mother lied to him and told him that his father was dead, and he grew up with his mother and stepfather. Initially, life was very difficult, being raised alone by his mother with his siblings. When his mother married his stepfather, things got better financially but significantly worse at home. Both his mother and stepfather were employed at the post office and were able to contribute financially more than what the family was used to. Things became significantly worse as a result of his stepfather's alcohol and cocaine addiction. His stepfather's addictions spurned an abusive and violent domestic violence relationship between the two of them. It was not long before Tyshawn became the subject of his stepfather's and mother's physical abuse. Unlike his siblings, Tyshawn grew tired of the abuse at home and fought back against his stepfather and mother. That fighting back would eventually lead to him being kicked out of the home sometimes, occasionally living in the street and with other relatives.

At school, Tyshawn was given an IEP and placed in special education, where he often got into fights and physical confrontations with other students. Tyshawn remembers his childhood as being very dark. At the age of 9, he attended the funeral of a 15-year-old family friend who had been shot and killed in the neighborhood. He opines that violence and death became normalized at a young age and that "little kids shouldn't have to experience that." Tyshawn does not want his two young children to experience that nor their lives normalized with violence like his was. Six years after he attended that funeral, Tyshawn would also get shot at 15 and, by that time, had witnessed multiple family and friends get shot or murdered.

School became increasingly difficult because of Tyshawn's history of outbursts and fights. At 9 years old, Tyshawn was diagnosed with bipolar and personality disorder. He often reported frequent mood swings and anger and frequent thoughts of suicide. When he was 12 years old, he tried to jump off the 8th-floor balcony of his building but was stopped by his mother. Tyshawn was never adequately treated for his mental health issues and refused to take the medicine prescribed. It is clear that Tyshawn should have received therapy and treatment for his illness and trauma and that untreated trauma simply became more complex in his adult life. He certainly would have benefited from such treatment. Tyshawn's mother recalls that he was once hospitalized at Kings County Hospital Psychiatric Ward for suicidal thoughts but refused medication after he was released.

Tyshawn would eventually drop out of Boys and Girls High School while in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade and embark on a familiar path that included drug use, homelessness, no parental

supervision, and eventually, criminal activity at a young age.<sup>4</sup> Tyshawn's behavior and predicament were consistent with many of the youth in East New York.



### **Tyshawn's Search for his Father, and Loss, Hopelessness and Suffering in an Environment of Deprivation**

In 1993 East New York was still reeling from the social and economic turmoil of the previous three decades. In 1996, East New York was only one of four community districts that had more than 350 juvenile arrests; the rate was 43 arrests per 1000 juveniles.<sup>5</sup> While great progress in East New York is being made today through gentrification, the elimination of poverty and social instability is not among that great progress. The community is still reeling from the human damage that resulted from a racial shift in the population due to white flight to the suburbs paved by accommodating government-funded mortgage programs excluding Black and Hispanics, redlining of the Black and Puerto Rican population by banks and the financial industry; neglect by local and federal authorities; underfunded schools and social services; and economic divestment from financial institutions.

The almost total neglect by the city and its agencies almost brought the area to the brink of collapse. The community has withstood a heroin epidemic of the '70s, an aids epidemic of the '80s, and the crack epidemic of the '90s. Over the years, East New York has received band-aids in the form of progress and attention where major surgery is required.

For his entire life, Tyshawn has looked for a father figure in an environment where many men were traumatized, killed or incarcerated. To further highlight to the Court the dysfunction in Tyshawn's life, Tyshawn did not find out who his father was until after he was incarcerated in this indictment. He was told by an aunt while at MDC who his real father was and met his father for the first time at MDC over the phone and during legal visits. In fact, it was his father who reached out to counsel and retained legal services for Tyshawn. Counsel has had numerous meetings with Tyshawn's father, who explained how both of them have suffered as a result of not being in each other's lives, but Tyshawn has clearly suffered the most and has a deep and lasting sentiment of anger and abandonment.

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<sup>4</sup> While he was in high school, Tyshawn earned a cumulative average of 52.32%. While incarcerated in 2007, Tyshawn earned his GED.

<sup>5</sup> Walter Thabit, How East New York Became a Ghetto (2003).

During our representation of Tyshawn, counsel was contacted by Tyshawn's elementary school teacher Milagros Fiore, who had come across a news article about the case. Ms. Fiore immediately had fond memories of a sweet, bright kid who was intellectually curious. She also had very dark memories of a young child who lacked adequate parental supervision and basic needs like having enough food and being properly clothed and groomed. Ms. Fiore recalled an incident where Tyshawn's mother was unable to find him for two days. Ms. Fiore remembers seeking help from the school administration to no avail, and she specifically recalls feeling defeated at how the school system and social services were ill-equipped to meet the issues that East New York presented for young Tyshawn. In her letter, attached as Exhibit "B," Ms. Fiore, perfectly summarizes the difficulty that a young, vibrant child with little to no options had in East New York. In sum and substance, her letter highlights how deprivation overwhelms promise. Ms. Fiore sadly understands the foreseeability of what happened to Tyshawn. His childhood was filled with signs and risk factors.

East New York is an environment where bright young men like Tyshawn had to make quick decisions based on their observations while living in chaos. Tyshawn clearly made choices that sealed his fate, but those choices were not free and autonomous choices. They were choices corrupted by a deep legacy of social, political, academic, and economic alienation. Young men in East New York often choose survival as opposed to activism. Instead of focusing on the real opposition in their lives, which is the institutions and systemic oppression in their neighborhood, they find opposition in each other. That is the tragedy and predicament that young men like Tyshawn find themselves in. There are no role models or peers to provide guidance and context to their lives. Gangs become the peer and support group that fills the void of family and community. These young men raise themselves in a violent and traumatic world that breeds an "eye for an eye" mentality and preemptive violence as a matter of survival. It is a cycle and phenomenon that is re-occurring as the root causes are never addressed, and East New York, as a consequence, is still the same neighborhood with the same reoccurring issues that existed in 1990 when Tyshawn was born, and Counsel Montgomery was 18 and going off to college.

It is a deadly cycle that has been enveloping young men for decades in the East New York community. Raising a young man in this type of environment is equivalent to holding the hand of your child during a tumultuous riptide. In one second, they are gone, and you both, along with the community, are forever changed. Gangsters and drug dealers become the heroes in a world of predator versus prey.

The level of devastation that these young men are expected to survive brings to mind Frantz Fanon's acclaimed book, *The Wretched of the Earth*. An intellectual masterpiece on oppression and colonization and the mindset developed by those who are squeezed into the tiniest of corners without resources.

This Court has observed hundreds of young men in Tyshawn's shoes. Hundreds of men from neighborhoods just like East New York were sentenced to hundreds of thousands of months. Tyshawn is facing at least 30 years in prison. In several of our meetings, Tyshawn described to Counsel how and why he lived the way he did and the regrets that he will have for the rest of his life. In detail, he recalled the loss of friends from violence. Like the underlying facts of this case, the decedent was alleged to have been responsible for the death of Tyshawn's

best friend. He described a neighborhood besieged by violence, drugs, and retaliation. He realizes how he has continued a destructive cycle, and now one of his goals is to hopefully prevent his young children from being next in that cycle. That is a tall order since he will be in prison for the formative years of his children. However, he is up to the task and uses the relationship that he and his father forged later in life as inspiration. The fact that Tyshawn did not connect with his biological father until he was in Federal prison for this current indictment is tragic and poetic at the same time and a fact that opens a doorway into the trauma and deprivation that consumes the lives of these young men.

**“The Elite Assassin Millas” (“EAM”), Gang Membership and the Impact of Poverty, Violence, Deprivation and Social Media and the Digital Age**

“EAM” is the Blood subgroup of the Bloods street gang that populates poor communities, prisons, and popular culture in America and now in New York City. In the last 25 years, Gang and Street Culture have been popularized and commodified via entertainment and fashion. Multimillion-dollar companies invest in promoting gang culture and music. Young impressionable kids in urban neighborhoods are inundated with gang culture through popular culture and the celebration of known gang members and drug dealers as successful businessmen in the music and entertainment industry. Gigabytes of discovery capture the promotion of rap lyrics, songs, violence, and gang signs through several social media platforms.

These young men are inundated with entertaining content that promotes violence, crime, and drug dealing as a viable and accepted pathway out of poverty. However, the systemic issues that existed 30 years ago in East New York have a causal and correlative relationship to gang activity and violence that we see today. The systemic issues are well documented and are historically unaddressed. Against this deprivation, many Black and Hispanic communities like East New York have had a long history of social, political, and economic alienation and sustained racism from local and federal policies and leadership. Richard Rothstein’s *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* lays out the blueprint regarding how demarcations based on race were created to form many urban Black and Hispanic communities like East New York.

Elizabeth Hinton’s *From the War on Crime to The War on Poverty* detailed the federal and local policies regarding the systemic issues in Black and poor neighborhoods that contributed to “EAM” as a gang. The response should not be to execute the young men who are victims and survivors of those environments or to lock them up and throw away the key. Most rational human beings and students of history who witnessed the social decay and infiltration of guns and narcotics in the ’70s to ’90s in neighborhoods like East New York would never have imagined that the culture of drugs and violence that would smother communities during those years would be celebrated, promoted and commodified as entertainment in today’s society. We now celebrate entertainers who have become millionaires, some even billionaires, by selling a narrative about drug dealing and violence in poverty-stricken areas like East New York. Those individuals who have gang affiliations and rap recording agreements are role models, along with athletes, that are promoted in society as success stories for young men like Tyshawn and his co-defendants. The celebration of

deprivation through entertainment is juxtaposed against the harsh social statistical data in East New York; despite the celebration of deprivation in society as entertainment, East New York remains broken for a large percentage of young men and women and defined by its lack of vitality for young men like Tyshawn.

The violence, drug selling, and profound ignorance are commodified into a brand and product, and genre of entertainment and music, which is on display 24 hours a day. Gang membership and entertainment culture are unique to the American experience and the young Black and Brown men at the bottom of the social totem pole. No other place in the world does such a phenomenon exists. The legacy of social, political, and economic alienation is of such a high degree and so complex that it manifests itself into billions of dollars being made by selling this lifestyle as a viable option out of poverty. It's quite diabolical. Diabolical that young men can still be affected by the legacy of slavery that they possess such a high level of self-hate that they gravitate towards gang membership and create a form of entertainment soaked in that self-hatred. So diabolical that corporations make billions of dollars from their investment in self-hate. So diabolical that other non-Black youths find it to be a form of voyeurism and entertainment. So diabolical that, as a society, we are normalized to it so much that as we watch the Superbowl, no one even questions that during the halftime show, we are watching Black men in prison outfits dancing and crip walking as entertainment.

It may make many of us uncomfortable, but that is the reality that young men like Tyshawn live. They live in a violent hypervigilant world where they have accepted their hopelessness. Music, art, and social media all become facilitators of their hopelessness and deprivation in an upside-down world where someone is willing to pay a premium for that deprivation. What other explanation other than hopelessness and profound deprivation can explain young men who are survivors of neglect, alienation, and poverty in a world filled with drugs and unemployment, poor schools, and poor health conditions have beef with one another, shoot at and kill each other then make songs and videos for law enforcement and federal prosecutors and the world to see.

To ignore the condition that is instrumental in creating this environment and underlying root causes and take the position that these are just simply horrible god-forsaken people is to turn a blind eye to the actual larger social context and history and the commodified trauma and pain being sold. That imagery that these young men of little hope and means are inundated with is a powerful facilitator to their social and physical death. It affects them all differently but definitely affects them all, whether they are defendants, cooperators, drug dealers, drug users, or those who are lucky enough to survive it or come from a family where someone was able to stop the cycle of deprivation. No one was able to stop the cycle in Tyshawn's world.

Gang membership does not occur in a vacuum. Housing remained the same. The poor and under-resourced schools remained the same. The infiltration of drugs and guns remained the same. The high unemployment and lack of resources for young Black men all remained the same in East New York.

Tyshawn still lacked basic resources. Tyshawn had no programming focused on his healthy development. His family and neighborhood were still reeling from the inability to control their infrastructure and ecosystem, and as a result, youth like Tyshawn make awful choices. The late great Judge Jack B. Weinstein hit the nail on the head in the *United States v. Bannister*, 786 F. Supp. 2d 617, 688-89 (E.D.N.Y. 2011), where he describes that young men like Tyshawn look up to gangsters and hustlers. Gang membership traditionally relies on young and impressionable youth who lack a stable environment. For those young men like Tyshawn and the rest of the young men involved in this indictment, they are looking for attention, identity, recognition, and agency over their lives where they have little and little seems to go right. Street and gang life, as advertised, seems like the perfect fit. For many of these young people, the gang provides fellowship and brotherhood, providing a family they never had. In this instance, EAM was the destructive force and vehicle that would ensure that Tyshawn would spend the next few decades in prison.

For the last twenty-plus years, street and gang culture has gained authenticity through media. Long gone are the days of Italian and Irish mobs and gangsters populating federal indictments and running lucrative enterprises. They are replaced by EAM and other Black and Hispanic gangs. We have included in the submission a PowerPoint presentation for review that provides further context as to the Gang phenomenon in Black and Hispanic communities.<sup>6</sup> The presentation is a reminder of America's complex history of race and crime, and culture and how it has corrupted another generation of young men like Tyshawn in East New York.

### **Conclusion**

For all the reasons set forth above, we request that this Court impose a sentence of 30 years or 360 months. Such a sentence is "sufficient, but not greater than necessary," to satisfy all the purposes of sentencing, for Tyshawn Corbett.

Respectfully,

/s/

Anthony Cecutti, Esq.  
Attorney for Tyshawn Corbett  
217 Broadway, Suite 707  
New York, NY 10007  
(917) 741-1837

Kenneth J. Montgomery, Esq.  
Attorney for Tyshawn Corbett  
198 Rogers Avenue  
Brooklyn, New York 11225  
(718) 403-9261

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<sup>6</sup> [Final Copy of The Digital age, Race, and Culture : Identifying when Prosecutors use Rap lyrics, Social media creativity, and other forms of Expression - jv edits](#)

# Exhibit “A”

(Psychological Evaluation)

# Exhibit “B”

Milagros Fiore  
2103 Willoughby Avenue  
Wantagh, NY 11793

My name is Milagros Fiore, and I am Tyshawn Corbett's former second grade teacher from P.S. 345 in East New York, Brooklyn. Even though he was a student in my class around 25 years ago, I still remember him fondly. I believe we had a warmhearted student-teacher relationship that I still remember and cherish to this day. Due to his soft spoken nature and sensitive heart, he left a deep impression on me. I treasured the connection I had with Tyshawn. For this reason, I would search for him online hoping to find that he was living a prosperous life. The Tyshawn that I uncovered in the news article is not the Tyshawn that I experienced. Yet, the Tyshawn in the news article is the one I feared his environment would create.

I remember Tyshawn extremely well. He was a sweet and kind-hearted child who was enthusiastic about learning. Tyshawn always participated in the lesson and was very curious, frequently asking questions to gain understanding. He often displayed perseverance. Tyshawn would continue to work on an assignment that may have been challenging to him until it was completed. What I believe connected Tyshawn and I was his spirit of humility. He often showed characteristics of gratitude, hope and honesty. Tyshawn was extremely forgiving towards his classmates when a classroom concern would transpire. I can vividly remember him sitting in my classroom in his light blue polo shirt and dark blue pants. He would look up at me with these adorable big, brown eyes and greet me every morning with a hug. I will never forget how he would address me faintly as, "Miss" whenever he needed my attention.

I recall one time when Tyshawn displayed his sweet disposition by making me purple jello. I remember him standing in the front of the classroom with this big, blue bowl filled with purple liquid. He was so proud of himself. He stood tall with a big smile on his face, stretching his arms out to hand me the bowl of purple liquid that didn't quite turn into solid jello. It was a thoughtful gesture from a student who wanted to express to his teacher that he appreciated her and delighted in coming to school.

Looking back, I also remember a disheartening incident that allows for a small glimpse into Tyshawn's life outside of school. I recall having a conversation with his mother regarding Tyshawn. She informed me in a humorous manner how she was unable to find him for the whole weekend. His mother went on to explain that he came out from under the bed on Monday morning because it was time to go to school.

To begin with, I consider it to be deeply disturbing that Tyshawn's mother wasn't concerned about her child missing for two days. Moreover, it is difficult to comprehend that Tyshawn was under a bed for two days and no one was able to locate him. It is equally unsettling that he may not have consumed any food or drink as well as use the restroom for those two days. I believe his

family life was unable to support him in the way Tyshawn required.

I did try to speak with the school's social services department regarding Tyshawn. I explained to them his home life situation and the event that happened when he was "missing" for two days. I clearly remember the day I went into the school psychologist's office. There were a few staff members seated in the work area. One individual just got engaged and they were having a small gathering. They seemed irritated that I was interrupting the celebration to discuss a student in my class. I remember the exact words that were said. The psychologist replied, "I can't get into his brain.", "We can't get into his mind and know what he is thinking." and "What do you want us to do?" I recall walking away in shock and feeling so powerless. At that moment I had a foreshadowing of his educational path. I worried about what would happen to him if he didn't have caring adults in his life to give him guidance and support.

I worried about Tyshawn because he met all the criteria an individual requires for joining a gang. Tyshawn didn't have positive influences in his life or productive places to socialize and engage in throughout the community. He was exposed to a poor educational system in East New York with virtually no employment opportunities presented to him.

Tyshawn didn't have the social or economic advantages that would have pushed him in the opposite direction of joining gang. Poverty is directly associated with the social problems in the area he grew up in, especially regarding the high crime rate. East New York has had some of the highest crime rates in Brooklyn. According to Wikipedia, East New York's 75th Police Precinct reported the highest murder rate in the city in 2011.

The community where Tyshawn grew up has significantly higher dropout rates and occurrences of violence in its schools. Children from the community attend schools that require students to pass through metal detectors and swipe ID cards to enter the building. Also, the school they are enrolled in has one of the lowest test scores and highest truancy rates in the state of New York. Gang violence is a common problem. In 2007, Thomas Jefferson High School shut down due to extremely low academic performance. According to Wikipedia, they had a graduation rate of 29%, with only 2% entering the school at grade level in math and 10% entering at grade level in reading. It is my opinion that the school system did not provide Tyshawn with the education he needed in order to become a successful, productive community member.

It is my opinion that this sweet, adorable child was molded by negative outside influences and his impoverished community. The environment of East New York, Brooklyn took an innocent little boy and gave him no opportunities to keep his innocence. Children need support from family and their community in order to become successful adults. When support is lacking, children will search for their identity in a social relationship, such as a gang. At this time, I would like to support Tyshawn in his current situation the best way I possibly can.

I understand that as individuals, we are free to make choices with our life. We have thoughts and they lead to our actions. It is also my opinion that Tyshawn didn't have many choices or options

in his life due to his environment and social circumstances. I do believe with my whole heart that if Tyshawn grew up in a different environment under alternative circumstances, he would still be that sweet, kindhearted individual. I would like for him to have the opportunity to become the person whom I know him to be and have another chance to have a prosperous life.